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Participants Profile in Airsoft Sport

Roşu Daniel *

University of Pitesti , Faculty of Physical Education and Sport, Pitesti, 110040, Romania

Abstract

Today some adults choose to play the war imitating realism by using a relatively new game called air-soft. The study purpose to identifying psychological profile and also the main motivations that make adults to invent and actively participate in the war games. Concrete results were obtained by interviewing 88 participants in the events (25 items), in period 2011-2014. Participants subject themselves to self-imposed privations war typically, with known effects on the personal satisfaction plan, strengthening the health, harmonious physical development. War play strengthens human relationships, in the benefit of cooperation and tolerance.

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1. Introduction

Her Airsoft is a relatively new sport, with a rapid evolution in some parts of the world and fairly contested - even banned - in others. Most sources indicate that airsoft appeared in Japan immediately after World War II, as a frustration of the Nipponese warriors who were not allowed to carry lethal weapons anymore. It seems that they started to play the war with different types of weapons. The evolution of weapons led in the 70s to the imitation of modern fire weapons, which used either biodegradable gelatin balls - leading to the appearance of paintball-, or using plastic balls in the case of airsoft. The major difference between the two sports is, thus, determined by the way of designing the player touched by the projectile: through marking with a non-toxic paint at paintball or on the basis

* Roşu Daniel. Tel.: +40 744 437 883.

E-mail address: danielrosu333@yahoo.com

of self-acknowledgement resorting to the code of honor in the case of airsoft. Furthermore, airsoft counts a bigger success on the basis of the realism generated by the form of the playing weapons, the propulsion of the ammunition, the players' distance of engagement.

Airsoft in itself represents a war game, a simulated military exercise. At present, there are at least two reasons for which these sports are banned or have restrictions in some countries - in the first place they use perfect visual imitations of modern fire weapons (called 'replicas'; they are electric, with gas or with bow within airsoft) and, in the second place, the speed and strength of the projectiles may generate injuries, especially when they exceed the normal limits (200m/s in some countries). The lack of a global general consensus of regulations regarding airsoft determines, implicitly, a lack of consistency of the special literature.

In Romania, using airsoft weapons was submitted quite unclearly to a lot of laws, especially concerning the definition of nonlethal weapons [1]. At present, in Romania, airsoft represents a sports subject matter acknowledged by O.M.E.C.T.S. (Order of the Minister of Education, Research, Youth and Sport) number 3265/23.02.2010 [2]. According to it, those who wish to play airsoft are directed to practice two sports tests: the first supposes attack and annihilation of a rival team, and the second supposes the conquest of a strategic objective (for example a flag of a rival entity). The majority of the regulations are meant to ensure a control device for airsoft weapons in relation to the common citizens, colleagues or to oneself. In UK in the year 2002 there were registered 923 accidents only within paintball, 47% of these being leg/knee/feet injuries [3]. Other American researches show that most injuries were produced on eyes and, in the majority of the cases the victims did not wear goggles [4].

2. Objective of the study

The research is oriented on the one hand towards the identification of the psychological profile of the participants to airsoft and, on the other hand, to finding the opinions of the participants as to the organizational frame favorable to practicing this sport in Romania, given the fact that almost every country has its own rules in accepting and developing airsoft. With the results obtained we will try to understand if the essence of practising airsoft improves more the intrapersonal relationships - frustration or a genetic code oriented towards male human type-agonistic [5] - or interpersonal - oriented towards the connection with the environment (in which even the hunt can be placed) and with the peers. [6].

3. Methods

The main research method used was the questionnaire, with 25 items, applied to 88 participants at airsoft events in Romania, between the years 2011-2014. To complete this, there was undertaken a clarifying interview with some of the respondents regarding some interesting issues. In order to interpret the data, it was used a statistic-mathematical method through arithmetic mean, standard departure, coefficient of variability and statistic correlation.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Establish the performing profile of the participants

Table 1. Age and gender

Indicators	Male	Female
Respondents - No .	78	10
Respondents - %	88,6	11,4
Age-average	30,5	22,8

It can be noticed from table 1 the big difference both of share and age between the participant gender echelons. The results revealed that playing the war is specific to men, which cannot seem surprising. Instead, it can seem surprising the appearance of the female echelon in such activities! The presence of men in the army is foreshadowed by a certain human type, physic and of personality, manful, temporarily unilateral. The society, however, made possible the integration of women in real wars, both in the past (being well known real heroines) and at present,

since all modern armies comprise female echelons. Thus, in 1991 in the conflict zone of the Persian Gulf there were more than 37 000 women in uniform, among whom 26000 were activating in the Terrestrial Forces [6], fact which demonstrates that women can handle military charges. This reality, next to the electric fantasy of the films with super heroines from nowadays as well as next to the natural desire of young women of being next to their partners during leisure activities at the end of the week fully justify the involvement of the female echelon in airsoft. The significantly younger age of these as compared to men, next to their presence in airsoft only with a friend/husband generates a possible explanation such as to the additional demonstration of manliness; another explanation for this fact may be, a identification with the macho-female type values.

Table 2. Areas of activity

Areas of activity	Literary, artistic	Administration	Health	Technical	Entrepreneurship	Military	Another
No. respondent	18	6	3	28	13	-	20

Table 2 shows the fact that it is hard to locate a social activity which focuses a bigger number of airsoft lovers. These have a big diversity of jobs, among which it slightly marks out only the technical area.

It is interesting the fact that the military jobs do not attract a public dedicated to airsoft; none of the respondents is in military active service. Nevertheless, a more thorough analysis of this issue reveals the fact that 32% of the practitioners have undertaken, over time, at least one military training, these data being correlated with the older age of these practitioners ($r=0,76$).

Knowing the past and evolution of the mandatory military service in Romania, it comes out the fact that these respondents have undertaken in the past (10-15 years ago) the compulsory military service (with a medium length of one year), being, in general, attracted by the military issues. The supplementary interviews carried out with only a part of the respondents revealed the fact that in the past, they were either forced to leave the military active service or they didn't have the chance to perform highly realistic simulations with fire weapons, thus, displaying a frustration.

At these data we can add the results of another item in the questionnaire which indicate the fact that 42% of the trainees have graduated high level studies, being Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts or PhDs, and 16% are undertaking these studies now. These cumulated data show the fact that airsoft lovers have, in general, good school training and at least sufficient material resources for the average class of the Romanian society.

4.2. Establish the performing profile of the participants

Table 3. Factors of performance at a good airsoft practitioner

Factors of performance	Somatic capacity (muscular body)	Motor capacity (how move)	Psychic capacity (how think)
Average points (%)	26	38	36
Standard deviation (stdev)	10,30	14,47	13,10
Coefficient of variability (CV)	37,8	37,7	35,4

Table 3 reveals the opinion of the respondents as to the three big components which influence performance, motor and psychic capacity being dominant, and the somatic capacity appearing as secondary. However, it can be ascertained the too big coefficient of variability, which shows the fact that the airsoft public in Romania is, for the time being, heterogeneous enough. The results may be considered somehow predictable for a sports subject matter recently established, the maturity (age) of the practitioners being able in the future to uniform the points of view.

Table 4. The motor profile at a good airsoft practitioner

Motor qualities	Speed	Coordinative capacity	Resistance	Force
Average points (%)	22	35	28	17
Standard deviation (stdev)	9,94	13,59	9,69	6,96
Coefficient of variability (CV)	44,3	38,2	34,1	39,6

Table 4 reveals that out of the motor qualities the most important is the coordinative capacity, followed by endurance and speed and less important is strength. The answer regarding the level of the strength development is corroborated by that in table 3 regarding the importance of the somatic type. On the other hand, it is worth to mention the bigger importance of the coordinative capacity in airsoft through the various possibilities it offers.

Table 5. The importance of psycho-motor components in airsoft

TS Components	Unimportant	A bit important	Important	Very important
General coordination		3	49	35
Fragmentary coordination		21	47	21
Static equilibrium		23	48	17
Dynamic equilibrium		14	39	35
Body scheme	8	30	42	8
Laterality	4	36	48	
Ambidextrousness	7	35	34	12
Muscular tonus		22	48	18
Spatial-temporal perceptions	2	8	30	48
Spatial integration	2	6	24	56
Kinaesthesia (the sense of moving)	2	4	38	44
Reaction speed		5	23	60
Anticipation speed		4	21	63
The synchronization of body movements		4	33	51

Table 5 shows that the practitioners consider the importance of a fairly large variety of psycho-motor components. There outstand two categories of components: *very big importance* : anticipation speed, reaction speed (with direct reference to the handling of airsoft weapons), spatial integration, the synchronization of body movements, spatial-temporal perceptions and kinaesthesia (with reference to the general movement of the body and the more efficient positioning in the field in relation to the outward environment - nature, improvements, installations); *important* : general and fragmentary coordination, static and dynamic equilibrium, body scheme and laterality, respectively those intrinsic psycho - motor components without any connection with the medium, and only with the own body of the practitioner.

Table 6. The importance of psycho-intellectual components in airsoft

Components	Unimportant	A bit important	Important	Very important
Decision			23	65
Anticipation			28	60
Attention		2	26	60
Vigilance			42	46
Mental concentration	1	4	49	34
Memory		8	48	32
Thinking		9	41	38
Imagination	1	16	39	32

Another item checked the opinion of the respondents as regards the importance of the components of psycho-intellectual capacity [8] considered to be relevant. Out of a list of 20 components, the best results were noticed at those presented in table 6. There outstand the following components relevant to airsoft: decision, attention, anticipation, vigilance, mental concentration, memory, thinking and imagination.

There have also been considered the components of the willing capacity [7]. There were analysed 10 components and there outstand the first 4 in the following way (table 7):

Table 7. The importance of the willing components in airsoft

Components	Unimportant	A bit important	Important	Very important
Perseverance		6	30	52
Militancy		7	33	48
Discipline and order		9	40	39
Voluntary effort		16	33	39

4.3. The optimization of the organization and leading of activities

The organisation and leading of the events is made on the basis of some considerable individual and collective efforts, so much the more given the fact that airsoft is a new sport in Romania. A series of answers are on the way of supporting event organisers, or the contractors of places for airsoft and can even elucidate the sympathizers (table 8).

Table 8. Issues of organizing and leading events

Preferred aspects	Answer of rank I-no. answers	Answers of rank II-no-answers
Airsoft weapon	With electric propulsion-64	With bow-10
Way of activity	In nature with improvements-51	In nature without improvements-29
Scenario	Raids or assaults-30	Ambuscades-21
Accommodation	Cottage or tent -61	No sleeping over -20
Size of the team	Small group -squad -72	Alone-Survivor-6
The motivation of practising	Team activity -33	Fresh air movement-30

4.4. Legal frame, security, popularization

The respondents consider that there should exist some special regulations regarding the transport, the display and handling of airsoft weapons in a percentage of 83%. The replicas should be traded only to the persons enlisted in legally established associations consider 62% of the respondents; the minimal participation age is of 18 years old (92% of the respondents). As refers to mandatory protection equipment, there are mentioned goggles on face by 88% of the respondents. 73% of the respondents also consider that in Romania it is necessary a superior organization on the form of a Special Sports Federation which would offer more information regarding the laws, regulations and events.

Conclusions

Airsoft represents a rather recent sports subject matter in Romania, which gathers an increasing number of participants.

The general analysis of the data gathered on the basis of a questionnaire reveals that airsoft may be considered a generous sport which facilitates in the first place the relationships with the environment and those interpersonal and to a smaller extent is focused on the development of intrapersonal relationships.

Airsoft is, in general, practised by men but nevertheless almost every team is accompanied by at least a younger woman. Man-woman proportion in airsoft is synonym with that in modern armies.

Airsoft lovers activate in a fairly large area of activities. The military career does not attract an audience dedicated to airsoft but, nonetheless, in the past 32% of the respondents benefited from military training, their presence in such activities being explained as a reaction of frustration.

The research reveals a series of capacities that are necessary to a good airsoft practitioner, whose very important components are:

- Motor capacity: coordination, endurance, speed
- Psycho - motor capacity: anticipation speed, reaction speed, spatial integrity, body movement's synchronisation, spatial-temporal perceptions and kinaesthesia.
- Psycho - intellectual capacity: decision, attention, anticipation, vigilance.
- Willing capacity: perseverance, militancy, discipline and order, voluntary effort.

As regards the organisational management of airsoft there appears that, at present, there are appreciated electric weapons, they prefer activities in the nature with improvements, the events, generally, imply accommodation in cottages or tents and the preferred activities are those of assault, in small groups.

The security admitted both by statistics and the opinion of the majority remits to face protection and especially the eyes.

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